

**Political History Collection  
Interview H.0021.02 : Tape 2**

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**Interviewed by:** Paljor Tsarong  
**Name:** Lhautara Tsendrön [Tib. lha'u rta ra rtse mgron]  
**Gender:** Male  
**Age:** ca. 62  
**Date of Birth:** ca. 1930

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## **Abstract**

Lhautara Tsendrön [Tib. lha'u rta ra rtse mgron] was a monk official in the Tibetan government. In this interview, he discusses the Tour Group he was a part of that went to China in 1953. He also discusses his attitudes regarding what he saw on tour, especially towards the monasteries and temples and how this influenced his thoughts on religious freedom in the future in Tibet. He also details the merging of the Tibetan government's Foreign Office with the Chinese government's office, and the National People's Congress meeting. He then broadly discusses the history of Tibet and Chinese relations and more specifically, the 17-Point Agreement and the revolt in Lhasa in 1959 in which he was a participant.

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## **Tape 2**

**Q:** Did they make an airfield at Namru [Tib. gnam ru]? I wasn't sure whether the word [you said earlier] was airfield, Namdruthang [Tib. gnam gru thang], or Namruthang.

**A:** There was an airfield at Dam [Tib. 'dam]. It was the first airfield.

**Q:** Is that so?

**A:** Yes. Later in 1959 it was moved to Gongkar. These days the airfield is in Lhoka Gongkar [Tib. gong dkar].

**Q:** In the northern area, a Payroll Office was established, so were there other [Payroll Offices] that were established in Tibet?

**A:** A Payroll Office was established at Nagchu and most probably they were established in other areas. In the northern areas when they came from Siling they had to come to Nagchu so one Payroll Office was established there. Likewise it is said that when they came to Chamdo and Giamda there were others established.

**Q:** So was the way they functioned the same?

**A:** Probably so. Probably that was the case. It mainly functioned to supply food for the travelling soldiers. There were so many Chinese soldiers coming.

**Q:** Later when they came and stayed, for example at Lhasa or Shigatse, then how did they procure their food supplies?

**A:** This was done in various ways. For example, in the Northern areas, there was a Payroll Office already established, right? So wherever they were established in various areas, there were Payroll Offices. They established one at Lhasa.

**Q:** In 1953 you went in the Second Tour Group to China. How did the tour groups first form and what was the reason for them?

**A:** The first group was sent in 1952. The members included Tibetan government officials, Tashilhunpo officials, and officials from Chamdo. They were sent to see how China has developed and to understand how their political system functioned. They said that it would be good to do that. So our government, Tashilhunpo and Chamdo sent members. Secondly, another reason was to be at the National Day [Ch. shi yi]. (the 1st of the October) celebration. So that's how the first tour went. The chair [Tib. tshogs gtso] of that tour was Liushar and many other officials went. So it was said that it is a good idea to have one every year. So they went and said what was there and the Chinese showed them all the good things and they made books regarding this. So, on the second

tour, the main group leader [Tib. tuan zhang] was Kalön Dokhar. Under him as drungtsi were Kheme [Tib. khe smad] and Gadrang [Tib. dga' brang]. They were the junior group leaders [Ch. fu tuan zhang]. Chamdo and Tashilhunpo had their own groups, though we were all together.

**Q:** So how were the people chosen? For example, who told you that you have to go?

**A:** At that time we had our Local Tibetan government so our government appointed us. It was not done by the Chinese. We had many ranks in our government and 2 were chosen from the various ranks. I went as a fifth rank tsidrung (monk official). So the Chinese did not say who to send. That choice was made by our government.

**Q:** When you went from here [Lhasa] how did you go, and how were things prepared?

**A:** Generally, regarding one's clothes and personal things, and one's servant, one had to make one's own preparations. But the Chinese were with us and if we needed extra animals for transportation, the Chinese said that they will pay for it. However we did not take anything from them. Mostly we used our own horses. And for some of the things that we needed, since the people were miser of the Tibetan government, what we requested they would do their utmost to deliver.

We went in two groups. We, the junior group, went via the Northern Route. Our leader was Gadrang [Tib. dga' brang] and Künsangtse [Tib. kun bzang rtse]. All together we were about 12 or 13 persons. We left Lhasa and went to Bongtö [Tib. 'brom stod], then to Lhundrup Dzong [Tib. lhun grub rdzong], Phöndo [Tib. phod mdo], and Nagchu. This was the northern route. From Nagchu we went to Sogtsendengön [Tib. sog tsan dan mdon], Gemar [Tib. gas dmar], then down to Khyungpo Tengchen [Tib. khyung po steng chen], then Lagong-Ngamda [Tib. la gong Inga mda'] and then we arrived at Chamdo. Sawang Dokhar, the principal head of the tour, the gadrung and the entourage went by the main route. This route went from Lhasa to Metrogongkar [Tib. mal gro gung dkar], to Giamda to Chamdo. We were to meet up at Chamdo and join to become one party. Up to Chamdo we rode horses. Those of us who came by the Northern route had our own horses and also used the horse corvée.

**Q:** So on the Northern Route you rode?

**A:** On both the routes. At that time there were no vehicle roads, so we rode to Chamdo and then from there we used vehicles.

**Q:** Why did you have to go in two groups?

**A:** One reason was that there were so many people that it would be difficult to make preparations for all of our horses, pack animals and accommodations. So if there were so many people, it would have been difficult for the miser [who had to provide these]. In order to avoid that, we went by the two routes in the traditional manner. For one person, we had to have 3 to 4 servants since we have to go down to China and then the animals had to be returned. So with so many people, it was not possible to go in one group. This was not specifically arranged by the Chinese. We thought it was better to go that way.

**Q:** So from Chamdo, where did you go?

**A:** From Chamdo we went by car and arrived at Jomda [Tib. 'jo mda]. Then we crossed the Yangtze River to the Gamtog Drukha [Tib. skam thog gru kha] ferry site and then to Derge Gönpchen [Tib. sde dge dgon chen] and from there to [answer not finished]

**Q:** So were there car roads all the way?

**A:** Yes, but not good ones. Especially on the road from Derge to Ganzi. There is a high pass called Derge Trola [Tib. khro la] on which there were many soldiers making the road, so the road was being made and travelled on at the same time. It was very dangerous. Then we went to Dartsedo. It is here that the real border of Tibet is located. Just beyond Dartsedo there is a bridge called in Chinese Shindongchow [Ch. xin dong qiao]. Just above that, in the middle of the water there is a deteriorated white stupa called Gya Chöten Garpo [Tib. rgya mchod rten dkar po] which they said was the border of Tibet. The traditional border which we speak of was just beyond Dartsedo. Once we crossed the bridge, things were really Chinese. There was a high pass called Erlang Shan [Ch. er lang shan]. Beyond the bridge it was really Chinese in race, dress and there was nothing Tibetan. On this side of the bridge, one could clearly see it was Tibetan-whether in dress or in speech. The speech was not incomprehensible, being a dialect of Kham, but of course there were differences in comprehension. However, since the Chinese made the preparations, none of those who were working there did not speak Chinese. Then we drove to Chengdu which was the leading town of Sichuan. From there they said that we would not be on time for the National Day celebrations, so the officials and the main people flew to Wuhan. From there, we took the train to Beijing. Most came later by road via Xian.

**Q:** All together you stayed there for about a year?

**A:** The round trip lasted about 11 months, almost a year.

**Q:** When you were in China, did you go to see places, shows, etc. How did that work?

**A:** We arrived at Beijing and after 8 or 9 days it was the National day, October, 1st. Our higher leaders stayed in a "higher" place than the rest of us who were with many others including foreigners. We stayed for 5 or 6 days and the ceremony was for 2 days. There was the whole thing with soldiers marching and people demonstrating. After the ceremony, we were taken on a tour of China. We went to about 20 odd cities and to most provinces. First we went to Xian which they said was the place where in the old days the Jowo [Shakyamuni Buddha statue] came from. Traditionally, it was the Tang emperor's capital. Then we went to Lanzhou, then Siling where we saw Kumbum [Tib. sku 'bum] Monastery. Then they took us to factories and to so many other places. Upon our return to Xian, we went to Dongbei (the northeast provinces) where there was a city called Shenyang, then Harbin, then to Inner Mongolia to a place called Helahar [Hohhot?]. It was a nomadic region. This was all Mongolian and it was one of the larger towns. Then we went to the real nomadic area where there was a Kangyur monastery. There were about 7 to 8 elder monks and around 10 novices, not many. They had begun schools and many things.

**Q:** Well, I was under the impression that you went on tour to China so that they can show you China's development, but they also took you to the monasteries?

**A:** Yes. The reason, it seems, was that they wanted to show us the freedom of religious worship. For example, in these areas there were many monasteries of various conditions. Sometimes, when the tour group came they looked good, but when there were no tour groups then they were just empty. There were many like that. As mentioned, the Kangyur Monastery had about 20 odd monks. We went there and nearby was a school. The people were all Mongolians, and they must be teaching Mongolian and Chinese. There were milk factories. Mongolians, it seemed, were mostly producers of nomadic goods and therefore the factories. Then we came to Helahar [Hohhot?], to Harbin and Dalian, then to Changchun where there was a factory producing a large vehicle called the Liberation Brand [Ch. jie fang pai] in Chinese. Then we came to Tianjin, then Nanjing to Shanghai, then Hangzhou, to Guangdong on the coast and then we returned to Beijing. So at all these places, it this way, in the morning [answer not finished]

**Q:** Yes, what was the daily routine like?

**A:** In the morning, we ate at 8 a.m. Then at 9 a.m. they took us out and from 9-12 we were taken to various factories. The majority of the time it was to factories. If not there, then it was to schools. For example from all the various places that we went, about 6 were electrical factories. Since we don't understand how electricity was generated, we couldn't understand much. Chinese cloth mills and cigarette factories we could understand because they began with raw materials and made a final product. With electricity, they said it goes up here, and there was some kind of steam and then something happened from the steam and what we saw as the final product was the light. So we were left thinking, "I guess that's how its made," since we didn't understand. Besides we didn't understand the language much. So it went on like this until 12 p.m. Then we had lunch and rested until 2 p.m. At 2 in the afternoon, once again they took us out. If they took us to factories in the morning, then in the afternoon, they took us to schools.

Then there were also some Chinese monasteries. In Beijing, there was the Yonghegong Monastery, Beihai, and one or two others. In Shanghai, there was the Jinziling Monastery. They told how there was religion, and about the monks. Then we got would return around 6 in the evening. Then they give us dinner and let us rest for a while. But around 9 p.m. they would take us to shows, dramas, gymnastics, magic shows, etc. The way they took us was about the same for everybody. Except for Sunday when they left us to rest, otherwise we had to go every day.

**Q:** So when you went to the factories, schools or the monasteries, was there somebody who explained things?

**A:** Yes, there was. However, since there were so many people, the leaders and some others had interpreters, but the rest of us may or not have been able to hear their translations. For example, if one got to a large city, lets say Shanghai and if we stayed there for 7 days, for 6 days we would tour everywhere. Then one day we would have a meeting and they would say to us, "Now what did you see and what do you think?" So people would say they saw such and such factories and they were good. These would be written down and a book was published. So it about all the good things. They, of course, wouldn't think of showing us anything but good things. So there's only good things to be said. We would not get to see the bad areas.

**Q:** So when you have a meeting did they ask you what you think?

**A:** So we went on tours, right? In one week, a meeting [answer not finished]

**Q:** One [meeting] per week. Did you have [meetings] every day or not?

**A:** No. not every day. So in one week we would visit the various places in the area. So about what we saw, they asked, "What have you seen? What do you think? How was the progress/development?" That's what they asked, nothing else really. So we said this and that was good. I saw the electricity factory and it was good. I saw this school and the way they were studying was very good. There were some factories where things were done by hand. So they would say it was done very fast and good. Some said this is very strange, how does it work? So other than that, there was nothing to say since that's all we saw. If we said that this was no good, they were not going to like it. So we had to say the usual stuff.

**Q:** So once you have said it, was there somebody who was writing these things down?

**A:** There were a lot of Chinese who were sent with us, doing interpreting and other things. They made the draft and later when we get to Beijing and the tour was over, among ourselves someone was appointed. They examined the draft and made a summary saying that the tour group of this year saw development and progress, and this is the progress that was made. These were the opinions from which a book was made.

**Q:** So what you have written, do you have to show it somewhere?

**A:** What we have written, our group leader and writers and the Chinese. A lot of people made revisions to the document. If it is okay, then that's it. If they were not satisfied, then they made changes. Then it was published. So this contained only good things. It was not possible to say any negative things. Probably, there are things that may or may not agree with their political outlook.

**Q:** When you went to the monasteries, did they speak of religious freedom?

**A:** Yes. One could go to visit the temples and offer prostrations, a candle, and incense. That's about all you could offer. The monasteries were well maintained-- incense was being offered and the images were clean. But this was only when we visited, not normally.

**Q:** Yes. In Tibet we were a very isolated country, so for many on the tour this was the first time that they had seen factories and cities. So what did most of the people think? Were they pleasantly surprised or did they think that it was no good and they were

being herded around?

**A:** It varied. When they first took us it looked good with factories, etc. That is true. Later when we saw one, two and others, we thought that going around was quite a hardship. If we looked at the production, they said it was phenomenal. It may be that way in the future, but looking at the way it was then, it seemed mediocre and a lot of hardship on the people. The crux of the matter was that it did not seem to be a happy life since one had to work with machines. Some saw that the machines alleviated the need for humans to labor, so that was good and produced greater production. So there were various points of view. However, the main thing was that people never understood the underlying situation. They only saw the surface.

**Q:** So after the tour was over and you returned, did most of the people feel that the 17-Point Agreement may not be so bad after all. Having seen China and thinking that later Tibet might become something like that?

**A:** Generally, as far as the development of the country was concerned, road construction, and construction in general, there was a feeling that later in Tibet this was a possibility and it would be good. It's hard to say what others thought, but my own thought was that the country could later develop with factories, etc. However, on the question of religious freedom, it was nothing but a mask. There was no way it could happen. Secondly, from the point of view of one's culture, traditions and habits, there was no way that it could be practiced. For example, when we went to China, they took us to all the places to see and enjoy like gardens and parks. However, the practice of Tibetans of going for picnics to linga (parks) and taking food along, and doing prostrations and making offerings, these activities by then were already absolutely non-existent. Even if one went to the parks, one sat on a bench or drank some water (could mean soft drink) that's all there was. You know our Tibetan way of sitting and enjoying in the parks -- that custom was not there. So for these customs we had in Tibet, there no way that they could have survived. Moreover, religious freedom was just temporary and I thought that there was no way that it could survive in the future.

**Q:** Why did you think that?

**A:** The reason, for example, was that when I was at Shanghai I was sick with appendicitis and they operated on me so I was not able to go on with the tour to Guangdong. Therefore, I arrived at Hangzhou before the others did. Up to that point, when I had seen monasteries, I thought that they looked good. At Hangzhou, the tour had not arrived and I had some Chinese companions appointed to look after me. They said, "Let's go for a walk." So I said, "Sure." So we went in a boat in the sea and it was a very beautiful place. They have a saying that "Hangzhou is like Heaven." It was a nice place. Then we reached the shore and there was a big building which was a temple. They had an image of Buddha of past, present and future [Tib. dus gsum sangs rgyas]. But it was in a terrible state, with bird droppings on it. Outside there were remains of a fireplace used by an animal herders. Some kids were playing in front and it did not at all resemble a temple. Later, when the tour group arrived, they took us there to the same temple, this time not by ship but by cars. The temple had been made so beautiful. The statues were so clean and shining. All the walls had satin hangings. In front there were lit candles and offering had been made. And there were 4 monks holding incense. I thought, "Oh, this is a very beautiful temple." Going around it a bit further, I got the feeling that I have been there before. Lower down, there were two stone lions and beneath these lions we had previously stopped and eaten fruit. I had put the leftovers of the fruit [Tib. ro do] [e.g. like orange peels] in between the statues and they were still there so then it dawned on me that this is indeed a tour [artificial, not genuine], made up special for when we were taken there. So the real truth is what I had seen previously, when I had gone there alone. There were none of these things. So I thought that all the tour places must be like that, and I began to wonder if all the places were like that and it really seemed that was how it was. So these things I thought could never be [later, religious freedom was not possible in Tibet]. Besides, when I examined their philosophy, it was clear. They stated flatly that the Communist party has no religion. However, while they stated that they will protect religious freedom, they stated unhesitatingly that the Communist system has no religion. So when this is the case then it was pretty sure [to me] that there cannot be religious beliefs.

**Q:** The Foreign Office was incorporated around the 9th or 10th month [lunar], right?

**A:** It was in 1953, around the 9th month that they were joined together. Otherwise we had a Tibetan Foreign Office [separately]. Then it was joined with the Chinese one since the Chinese said that it has to be joined since Tibet can't have such an office. So it was the first office [joined together]. Before I went to China, it had not been joined, but when I returned, it was already joined.

**Q:** In the 17-Point Agreement, there was something about a Military-Administration Committee [Tib. dmag srid u yon lhan khang]. Later the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was established. So how did this happen? What was the beginning of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region? What happened to the talk about a Military-Administration Committee?

**A:** When the 17-Point Agreement was implemented, there was this "Gongtong Gangling" [the "Common Program"] and the Military-Administration Committee. Gongtong Gangling must have been some Chinese constitution [Tib. rtsa khrim] [Note: It was an interim constitution promulgated in 1949. It was replaced by the PRC's 1954 constitution].

**Q:** Gongtong Gangling is a Chinese word, right?.

**A:** Yes. There seemed to be something like that, but we didn't know about that. Part of this law had a clause calling for the establishment of Military-Administration Committees. An organization was needed to rule Tibet, so this was it. In 1954, the Dalai Lama went on a tour of China. During this time he met Mao Zedong and instead of this Military-Administration Committee, the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was agreed on.

**Q:** So they were saying you don't need to start the Military Administration Committee?

**A:** Yes. They were saying now you don't have to start that. but instead [start] the Tibet Autonomous Region.

**Q:** So, why were they saying that you don't have to start the Military-Administration Committee.

**A:** I cannot tell you about that in detail since I don't know much about it, but it seems to me that the Military-Administration Committee meant that it is concerned with both military and politics. So the Tibet Autonomous Region meant that you ran your own affairs without China interfering militarily and politically. So ideally, the Tibet Autonomous Region means that one would run one's own country [Tib. rang gi mis rang gi yul skyong ba]. The Chinese would only help, but the Tibetans ran their own [area]. So that must have been the reason. So if the Military-Administration Committee was begun, then it was something the Chinese would do. The Tibet Autonomous Region had the implication that one ran one's own place and therefore could also set the timetable of reforms. This was very clear even in the Dalai Lama's biography [referring to "My Land and my People"] where he states that I went down and thought that instead of the Military-Administration Committee, the Tibet Autonomous Region would bring greater freedom to Tibet and so I did this. So I think that was the difference.

**Q:** In the 17-Point Agreement, it is said that in the traditional system and government will remain intact. The Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region seemed to be like a whole new system of government. Was it agreed to easily? Could they have said we will not agree to such a thing?

**A:** No way.

**Q:** Couldn't one say that there was nothing in the 17-Point Agreement about a Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, and that this is like a new form of government?

**A:** Well, such talks could happen, but they could not say that to the Chinese. In an international setting we would be able to say that this is what we had agreed to earlier, and if things were done in accordance with the Agreement, then it is alright, but this was not the case. Year by year things did not go according to the Agreement, and that is why we Tibetans in 1959 rose up. When the 17-Point Agreement was implemented, if everything went according to it, then there would be no need for the 1959 uprising. The reason for this was that democratic reforms were to be implemented only after the Tibetan people had agreed to it and then China [Ch. Zhongyang] would be informed and then the changes would be gradually made. There was no such thing as they wanted to do reforms immediately.

So things did not go according to the Agreement. For example, our 2 sitsab were sacked. They [the Chinese] were saying that the two were instigating bad relations with China. However, these two were appointed and they had the full support of the people. So they were saying that the sitsab were not listening to the Chinese, so they will not do, and they used their power to get things done. The reason why we say that the Chinese used imperialistic power [Tib. btsan dbang] is that the 17-Point Agreement was implemented, but things were going beyond that. They left an Agreement that was to their liking, and even that they did not stick with it. And since this got worse and worse, Tibetans got desperate and rose up in 1959. So that's it. There wasn't any place to appeal to.

**Q:** In 1954, the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama went to China for the "National People Congress." Now when one looks at this from the outside, since only those who were under China would go to such a meeting, so during this time in Lhasa or among the officials wasn't there any talk that if they attended this meeting, then it's a confirmation that one is part of China since this meeting was only for Chinese states. So from the outside, from the point of view of America, England, etc., it would look like Tibet was a part of China. So, from our side, wasn't there any idea that it was not good to go and couldn't we have said we don't want to go.

**A:** Kungö, unless you must understand this from a historical perspective, it will be difficult. Really!

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** The Dalai Lama was going to attend the Congress in 1954, [but] in 1950 -- the 17-Point Agreement had already been implemented in 1951. So we knew that it had already been accepted [that Tibet was] part of China. So later there was no way the Dalai Lama could say we are not going to attend. The reason we had to implement the 17-Point Agreement in 1951 was not a case where we didn't tell the world [that we were not part of China]. During the Chinese invasion we told India. At that time, India openly said that we are part of China. The Dalai Lama went to Yadong and we contacted America, England, France and others and not one supported us. That is why we had to agree to the 17-Point Agreement. Otherwise we would have never thought of agreeing.

Therefore, once we had no support, to complain while we were already being eaten up [was not feasible], so through sheer force we had to send people to hold discussions for the 17-Point Agreement. At that time, in order to tell the world about this, we had to send people to India, Nepal, America, England and altogether about 5 countries. We said we are sending our representative and the Chinese are invading us. That was even before the Chinese came. But no one was backing us. And at that time, when the Chinese forcefully conveyed their views, India said that we were part of China. So we could say nothing, and so we were bullied by the Chinese who were attacking us and literally eating us up [Tib. zas]. So when they said at Chamdo it's a good idea to have an agreement, then we had no choice. Of course, we didn't want to do that. So that's how it happened.

So later, if we said we won't listen, then how could we say that? Our necks were already tied. If we did that, they would suppress us like they did in 1959. Even in 1959, we rose up. We had no backing, but we were just adamantly united to turn against the Chinese. And when we said that the Chinese must leave, so many of us got killed and the Dalai Lama came out since the Chinese had occupied everything.

So these things you have to understand based on the [actual] historical events. Otherwise, if you just suddenly look at a particular event, then you would think that it is strange. How did they suddenly accept such things? Even in the West, people probably think that way. They are really not to blame, because they would not know. So historically, that's how it happened. So if we really look at this from an absolutely truthful perspective, Tibet was really independent from the time of the Dharma kings. Moreover, later from the time of the 13th Dalai Lama; from 1905, 1906 to 1959, Tibetans were totally separate [from China]. There is nothing else [to say]. These are the factors, the real truths, the reasons why it forms the basis on which the Dalai Lama today is saying what he is

saying. However, the Chinese were too powerful and ate up all the land, so the Dalai Lama had to leave. Still today, it is because of this truth that people know about the Tibet situation; that the country was invaded and so we have a lot of support. So today, whatever hope we have, it is on the basis of this. So these are the reasons. I cannot tell you very much in detail, but it is also in the Dalai Lama's biography and he has also stated this many times, and has stated it most clearly. Anyway, that's how it happened.

**Q:** In 1953, the Foreign offices was joined together. How did it happen that we had to do things together, etc?

**A:** Until then, it had already been many years since we started the Foreign Office. Since we were an independent country, we were running our own foreign affairs. After the 17-Point Agreement, we became part of China so we could not have foreign affairs. So the two joined together with the power obviously being with the Chinese. Previously, when we had to take up matters with the Gorkha (Nepalese) or with Dekyilinga [Tib. bde skyid gling ga] (British/Indians), our Foreign Office was doing it. Once we merged, it was no longer like that.

**Q:** So when it was merged, on that day, how did it happen exactly? Did the Chinese come [to the Tibetan office]? So how did it happen?

**A:** The Tibet Foreign Office was held at the Tsuglagang. The Chinese Foreign office [answer not finished]

**Q:** You said that there was one at Somphü.

**A:** The Chinese Foreign office was at Somphü, near Ramoche. So they said to bring over all the documents that we had in the office at the Tsuglagang to Somphü. That's all there was to it.

**Q:** So before that, the Chinese office had already started.

**A:** Of course. In 1951 the Agreement was made and the Chinese had already come to Lhasa by 1952. So they already had the power, right? Therefore, they started the office. Since foreign relations could only be handled by China, the Tibet Foreign Office along with all the letters and everything was joined with the Chinese one.

**Q:** As you said last time, Kungö Liushar, Depön, 2 tsendrön; Drakpa Yargye, Sandutsang Rinchenla, Taradoba, Nyanor Lingba and you were working there [in the Tibetan Foreign Office]. So, during this time, what kinds of talks did you all have. Please explain exactly people's moods.

**A:** Well, once it was joined together, they said that Tibet and China should have good relations. Our government said this, which, of course they were expected to say. One could not instigate bad relations. So whatever the Chinese said, we have to do right? Secondly, the Chinese made 3 sections [Ch. khe] or units: the first, second and third. In each unit, there was 1 Chinese and 1 Tibetan. Under them, there were mostly Chinese workers and some Tibetans also. The 1st unit dealt with relations with India. At that time, the Indian representative was were staying at Dekyilinga. The second unit was for Nepalese relations. The 3rd unit looked after the internal affairs, procuring and looking after things, documents, etc.

**Q:** When you worked there. was the salary was paid by the Chinese?

**A:** Yes. What work we had to do was regarding the area [Tib. sa gnas] of Tibet. Since the documents are in Tibetan, the documents were translated. For example, I was in the 1st section, dealing with India. So whatever documents were needed, we Tibetans looked for them, examined them and translated them into Chinese. Then regarding relations with Dekyilinga, Tibetans knew how it was done previously. so they told us, "Yes that's how it was, and this is how it should now be handled." For example, if the Kashag wanted to invite Dekyilinga's representatives, in the old days it would go through the Tibet Foreign Office and then the Kashag. Now it went through the Chinese Foreign Office then to the Kashag who were told about the appointment time, and what the Kashag can and cannot say, and what the discussions are about. For all this, the Chinese would give instructions.

**Q:** So, those of you who were working there, did you have any sort of problems?

**A:** No. Those won't crop up since the work we were doing was concerning the documents, and at that time the Chinese were also very diplomatic. So we just told them what is in the documents and this was translated into Chinese. When our opinions were given, they said that is very good. During this period, they never said these were no good, since they had just begun doing things [in Tibet].

**Q:** Did they ever say, "Oh! you are having too close relations with Dekyilinga/India, you shouldn't do that, etc."?

**A:** If there were such things, they would be settled by them. We [Tibetans] had nothing to do with it.

**Q:** So such things never happened?

**A:** No. They would say don't do this [if it occurred]. In our office we wouldn't do such things, but if others did something like that they would reprimand them. [see Sandu Rinchen's interview (H.0059) for an example of an argument over this].

**Q:** From earlier times, you people knew the workers in Dekyilinga well and had good relations with them, so if you went and tried to be close to them [sentence not finished].

**A:** That they wouldn't allow, or, rather, it was not possible since we had to work together and there were rules and regulations. For example, even if we had to attend a dinner, they will tell us how to eat and how to talk. So if we tried to be close to them it would not be suitable.

**Q:** Oh, they would tell you all that first?

**A:** Yes, we had a lot of studies to do every day for periods of an hour or so on how foreign relations work. They even taught each of us how to eat. We would all meet together and the food was even actually served.

**Q:** I see.

**A:** And if one had to go abroad, the men were one thing, but the women were taught how to put on their make-up. Their clothes were even made by the government. In these matters, he [Chinese] was very diplomatic.

**Q:** During this time were there any Tibetan women working there?

**A:** No.

**Q:** From the 1950's, the price of food increased and it has also been said in the Dalai Lama biography that the Chinese came to help Tibet, but instead almost caused famine. So during this time in Lhasa how was the food situation?

**A:** Generally, in Lhasa, the population was not large and the food was very available and cheap. However, during this time, the reason food prices increased was that 4,000 to 5,000 Chinese came from Chamdo. After that, from Nagchu, I think Fan Ming was the leader, and there was 6,000 to 7,000 soldiers. Therefore, many came. The Chinese were saying was that they had come to help and support Tibet and improve the living standard of the Tibetan people. However, those who came to Tibet, as far as food supplies were concerned, said that it was stated in the 17-Point Agreement that the people were going to help them. That was their selling point. So at first since there was a set number of soldiers, the government did help them and they were able to do their best. But, as their soldiers increased in numbers, although they were trying to cultivate fields, one cannot harvest the fruits immediately. So with the increased numbers, the traditional supply that was sufficient for Lhasa city was not at all enough. So the Chinese were saying that they were paying for the food, but the fact of the matter was that they were collecting it all. So if our Tibetan people were sufficient with 100 things, for them even a 1,000 things was insufficient. So unlike the old days, barley, butter, and all Tibetan produce was increasing [in price] yearly. For example, from the government side they have helped a lot, and provided tons of barley, but it was an endless affair, and these had to be provided every year. So if it was a case where one had to provide for one year, that would be alright. But to do it every year, then it got worse. So produce cannot just come instantly. Then whatever stores of grain the government had, they gave. Besides, labrang, aristocratic families and wealthy persons had a custom of storing grains. These were taken out to help. Therefore, for the general public, since the Chinese consumed it, availability was difficult. Since produce became scarce, the Chinese paid higher prices and therefore the price was increasing. Most probably, butter, barley, meat, and others had increased about 5 to 6 times. It's not just a little, like increasing from 10 to 13 ngüsang to 20-30 ngüsang.

Likewise, concerning land, they said they wanted and took the best places. For example, in Lhasa towards the southern side, downwards from Tsidrung Linga down to Trungji Linga, it was all parks before, but then it was all occupied by the [Chinese] military. That is how the [Chinese] Military Headquarters [Ch. jun qu] came into being. Then south of Norbulinga there is Nortölinga which is a most pleasant and fertile area on which anything would grow. All of this area was occupied and they said that they were going to grow vegetables and it became a military camp. Later, and even now, was called the August 1st State Farm [Ch. ba yi nong chang] and the July 1st State Farm [Ch. qi yi nong chang] because it was first started on the August 1st, Army day, and on July 1st, the Communist Party's Day.

**Q:** The fields?

**A:** Yes, these days there are vegetables and [answer not finished]

**Q:** Previously it was what, Nortölinga?

**A:** South of Norbulinga is a place called Nortölinga. It was place where there was grass for the animals, and if at that time it was planted, which was not done extensively, it was a very fertile place with good water. So all these places were taken saying that it was for their vegetable garden. But since it was not enough, at this time there was danger of famine. In the history of Tibet there wasn't even talk of famines. So while the Chinese had said that they have come to peacefully liberate Tibet, and that they had come to help. All this was just from the mouth. Actually, there was a food problem. Because of this, the 2 sitsab said this will not do. The Dalai Lama has also said this in his biography. Sitsab Lukhangwa said it won't do, and said that the Chinese had said that they had come to help Tibet, but not to forcefully occupy lands and cause potential famine. So if you must have soldiers, then they should be on the borders and there is no need to have so many in Lhasa. Besides there is no need to have soldiers in Tibet since we do not have even one foreign country forcing us, except for China. So that was the reason they said that the two sitsab won't do and have to resign.

When the Chinese first came they bought things and paid money for them so they [people] thought, "Not bad. They pay for it." Then when food really started getting less, then people thought that this was really going to result in famine and their consciousness grew and they began agitating and organizing. So they formed groups, shouted at the Chinese when they passed by, pasted up wall posters and even small children started saying things like "Go home Chinese, don't stay with us". So this was the time that the first People's Association began. So that's how the problem with the food situation arose.

**Q:** So they were saying that there was danger of famine. I'm wondering exactly how difficult it things were?

**A:** Things had become very difficult. For example, earlier if one was spending, let us suppose, 30 ngüsang for food, now even 100 ngüsang was not enough. So you had to get that 100 ngüsang from somewhere, right? But there was no place it could come from since people were making a living doing the traditional things. The reason the price rose was that the Chinese were buying all the stuff. Right at that time, there was no hunger, however if it got worsened every year then there was danger of hunger occurring. For those who had wealth, they have to pay more, but they could still buy it. However, for the poor, the general public, it was way above their purse strings and so they were in great difficulty. Where, previously, 1 was enough, now 10+ was not even enough.

Moreover the source [for more money] was difficult and that was why there was the great danger of famine.

**Q:** Now the government workers and the traders were able to buy at higher prices, right?

**A:** Yes. Some could since they had money. They had to buy things, since they have to get food. The reason why it is said that there was a danger of famine was that all the food item prices increased since there were increases in the population due to the Chinese numbers increased. So those who had some money would have enough for a year or two. He would do something since he is working and also earning some here. But the majority had difficulty. Likewise, in the villages, all produce comes from there, nothing grows in Lhasa, right? Whatever, barley, butter, meat, etc, comes from the rural areas. And since prices were higher in Lhasa and the goods were being brought to Lhasa, then there were less available in the rural areas.

**Q:** Now during this time, the villagers had to sell their goods at Lhasa, right? So since the price was higher then they were getting more money, right?

**A:** No, No. See - it was said that we have to help the Chinese. The traditional taxes had to be paid as usual, right? So after this was provided, the government had to help the Chinese from sources over and above this traditional tribute. However, their [peasants, nomads] yields were the same. And that too these only occurred once a year, right? Sometimes better, at time worse. Therefore there was no way to increase the production immediately. So whatever little there was, the Chinese bought it. So if one goes to buy it then it has to be bought at a very high price. The money that one got selling the goods whose price kept increasing [was good], but at the time, having already sold one's production, then when there were no items to buy, then having money was no use. Where were they going to bring it from? Every year what was in one's country was getting less. It didn't help to make money. One [segment] is making some, and that too was the wealthier section, not the poor.

**Q:** Let's say approximately, in 1950, whether it was grains or butter, what was the price? What was it in 1955 and then by 1959? How much had it increased?

**A:** Most probably, before the Chinese came, around 1949, barley was only 3 or 4 ngüsang. Later, in the first year, it increased to 11 or 13 ngüsang.

**Q:** When you say first, you mean 1951-52?

**A:** Yes, and then later it went to 20 ngüsang odd.

**Q:** In 1959?

**A:** Yes. So it gradually increased, not all of a sudden in one year. So it was increasing yearly because there were more mouths to feed but the production remained the same. The Chinese said that they were producing, but they were unable to become self-sufficient.

**Q:** What about butter, around 1950?

**A:** Likewise. In 1950

**Q:** Do you weigh by the gyama or what?

**A:** Yes, we had what is called khe. 1 khe was 5-6 ngüsang.

**Q:** Around 1950?

**A:** Yes. Later, 1 Khe was about 100 ngüsang.

**Q:** Besides the produce of Tibet, what about items like tea, sugar, etc. Did these items increase? For example, tea, came in tea bricks.

**A:** Yes, they also increased. Tea came from China and one could not get the good quality of earlier times, only the inferior quality. Even these were much more expensive then the earlier ones. The reason why these increased is that these imported items were not enough [to meet demand]. The Chinese asked traders to bring items for them. When they brought the items, some of them were accepted, but for others there was no place to deliver [orders weren't honored]. That's how so many traders became bankrupt. What was happening was that when the Chinese were ordering items they ordered a lot. Later when these items arrived, they said this is not it [what they ordered], this is not good enough. So there was no place to get rid of it. That was very dangerous for traders.

**Q:** But, why didn't they accept the goods?

**A:** What they said was that the goods were not what they had ordered, and the items were not good quality. So they didn't want to accept it and so traders went bankrupt.

**Q:** So earlier in 1951-52 they were not making these problems?

**A:** At that time, there were no Chinese so we could do what we wanted.

**Q:** No, No. In 1951-52 the Chinese were ordering from the traders, right?

**A:** In 51-52, since they had just come, if they ordered sugar, flour, rice, iron, matches, and other things from India, whatever they ordered they accepted and paid for it. They were nice about it. So the Chinese ordered more and more items, and we, thinking that



this was reasonable and that they were being very good, we bought more and more things. But later, in 1957-58 they were not accepting delivery of goods.

**Q:** So when they did not take delivery of the goods, did they say that the quality of the goods was inferior. Or did they say they now have enough, or were they just purposely sort of antagonizing?

**A:** They were saying that this is not what we had ordered. This was used as an excuse. And if they didn't buy, then nobody else did. For example, I think it was Dombor who bought some iron. This was ordered by the Chinese. Later they didn't take delivery and all the way from Phari to Lhasa there wasn't a single place that didn't have iron. The loads had to be paid, so when they reached there and they didn't take delivery, it was left in the various places. So first they ordered, then they said they already have it so they don't need it. Then there's no place to put it. The private people can't afford to buy it.

**Q:** But how can they say such a thing. First they order and then they say they don't want it.

**A:** Come on Kungö, think about it! That's what's called suppression! [Tib. btsan gnon]. If I order from you and I'm more powerful, then you really believe me and you conscientiously work on it. Later I say, Oh, this is not good, this is not what I ordered, I don't want it! So because of their power how can one win by arguing that you ordered it and you said you wanted it. That's what happened. At first they were good and we also supplied them. So that's how it happened and many traders even went bankrupt.

**Q:** So later they were saying that they don't want these things, right?

**A:** Yes. Some said we have them so we don't want them now. Others said this is not the quality we ordered. So when they say that and the goods are not taken by their offices, then there's no place to take them, or reduce the price and sell and take a loss.

**Q:** So during this time when there was a food shortage, it was reported in some Indian newspapers or something that the Chinese ordered grain from India. The Indians said that they couldn't supply all that they wanted but gave some. Have you heard anything like that?

**A:** No, I have not. No.

**Q:** Yes, it was in some documents about them supplying 10,000 khe but only 3,000 was sent.

**A:** It is possible. They also claimed that they were bringing rice from China. This was something that they constantly said from 1959 on. That in the old days there was no rice to be eaten in Tibet and so we made it possible by transporting from China. However, when they came, the supplies had to be obtained from the Tibetan areas. Therefore, it got worse yearly. It was not that they didn't try, they did grow vegetables and fields.

**Q:** When you say that the Chinese planted fields, was it only vegetables?

**A:** At that time the majority were vegetable fields.

**Q:** What about rice and others?

**A:** Rice won't grow in our country.

**Q:** What about barley?

**A:** Only after 1959. Before that there were not many fields planted, and there were no great production claims by the Chinese. This must be correct since the Chinese who came were soldiers and office workers. The general populace like now were few. At first the soldiers and workers came and so they had their work and won't do other work [won't plant]. Lately, general settlers came who did the planting.

**Q:** Let me ask you this. In March the uprising took place. Where were you and what happened during this period?

**A:** In 1959, the uprising, actually a lot of people have already described it in detail and so I will just tell you the gist of it. Everybody knows about the real cause of why the Dalai Lama is here now, and why the Chinese actually used military force. So during this period I was in Lhasa. So if I were to tell you briefly about the beginning of the uprising.

**Q:** What was the cause of the [revolt] on 1st day (March 10) of the 2nd Month of 1959?

**A:** The Dalai Lama was invited to the Chinese Military Headquarters [Ch. jun qu] and it started from there. If one asks was the Dalai Lama really invited to see the show [on account of the show itself], the Tibetan people firmly believe that that was not the case. Sure the Chinese did request the Dalai Lama to come, but unlike the usual case, they said no bodyguards are allowed, and when people come to see the Dalai Lama pass by, the public cannot go beyond the bridge. That was unlike the normal situation. Also the Dalai Lama's entourage must be reduced. There were many other things which I cannot remember right off. So the people thought that most probably the Chinese were just using the show as an excuse to arrest him. That's what was suspected and the people thought likewise. Why this situation had to arise was something created by the Chinese.

On the one hand, since 1957 after the forceful liberation in the lower areas [Sichuan] democratic reforms began. The democratic reforms were to be postponed, but in those areas in Amdo and Kham (Dotö and Dome areas) lamas and many people were killed. Even newspapers were published [about this]. Second, the people from these areas had no place to go except Ütsang [Central Tibet]. When they came to Lhasa they [the Chinese] kept track of them and said that they have to surrender their arms and ammunitions and they never left them alone and so they left to start the guerrilla warfare in the southern regions and fought in Nyemo and other areas. They met the Chinese and some Chinese were killed. So it was during this bad situation that they wanted

to invite the Dalai Lama. So the Dalai Lama really had to go and he could not say he won't go. So when he was to go, the Tibetan people said that the Chinese were tricking him [Tib. g.yo sgyu]. Generally, wherever the Dalai Lama went the custom was that the 25 armed Bodyguard regiment troops had to accompany him. This was also a worldwide custom. The head of the country had that privilege. So the Chinese said that even these were not allowed. And audiences for the people were not permitted beyond the bridge. If something like that happens, they proclaimed it would be of great concern. So the people said that it won't do for the Dalai Lama to go. So that was the reason why on March first, the people came to Norbulinga and shouted. They came to stop the Dalai Lama from going. That's how it started. So that's the reason why the people came. There were no demonstrations against the Chinese. They said that if the Dalai Lama goes then we can't rest in peace.

If we examine the area of Lhasa, there were many soldiers and many fortifications. They [the Chinese] were fully ready for a military showdown. Therefore, looking at all this, we were not at ease, so [they said] please don't go. So they came to make prostrations and not to demonstrate against the Chinese. However, on that day, the Tibetan people, as a result of 8-9 years of increasing Chinese suppression even going beyond the very Agreement that they themselves had imposed, so like puss that had been collecting, on that day it burst. So the people began shouting for the Dalai Lama not to go and they chose and left their own guards at Norbulinga. When we went there, I saw this. So that day Chamdo Khenjung was killed outside of Norbulinga. He was a government official and a relative of Chamdo Phagpalha [Tib. 'phags pa lha].

**Q:** Some say people threw stones at him and then there was gunfire. He was shot right, in the air.

**A:** Yes, he was shot. I didn't see it, but those who did said that. So it must have been his day to die. In the morning he was at the Drungja. Then he rode a bicycle, wore Chinese clothes and had a mask around his mouth, they said. Later when he was killed there was nothing left but a Chinese uniform. So when he got to Norbulinga they said, who is that? Some said he must be a Chinese spy. So he ran away but was chased and so he seemed to have fired one or two shots into the air. And then he was stoned and killed. That's how it happened and it was not a situation where one of the people shot him. He must have thought that if he fired then maybe they would not chase him. So the people got angry and killed him.

**Q:** On that day where were you? In the morning you were at Drungja, right?

**A:** Yes, in the morning I was at the Drungja. When I was coming from home we didn't know about this. [I saw] a lot of people going somewhere and asked them what it was all about. They said people were going to Norbulinga. We said, when you get there, there won't be an audience [with the Dalai Lama]. So when we got there, there were so many people who were prostrating and saying the Dalai Lama should not go. So that's what happened that day. Then the Dalai Lama did not leave for the show. However, we and the people's representatives said that we can't leave things as it is and we had a meeting at the Shabden Lhagang [Tib. zhabs brtan lha khang] chapel room, where it was said that the rice eaters and the tsamba eaters had to be separated. So obviously, they were all going to be tsamba eaters and not rice eaters, right? After the meeting then we all stayed at Norbulinga.

**Q:** When was this meeting?

**A:** On the 1st day.

**Q:** So who was at the meeting?

**A:** All the government officials were there. People's representatives and many other people too. So the real reason of the meeting was that it was said that we made prostrations that the Dalai Lama should not go today, and in the future he also should not go. At the present time, the Chinese policy is bad [Tib. ngan po], and although we have the Bodyguard regiment, we the people will voluntarily form guards. So from this day on, Tibetans are Tibetans and the Chinese are Chinese and the Chinese will have to leave. We cannot listen to the Chinese anymore. So the Tibetans were separated as Tibetans and those who want to can join the Chinese. This will be decided from this day on. So that's how the categories "tsamba eaters" and "rice eaters" came into being. Then at the meetings, the people's guard and all were discussed. Then after the group was formed, the next day or so the various guard assignments were made. So around Norbulinga, the army and the people's guards were positioned. Then the Dalai Lama advised that the meetings should not take place in Norbulinga, besides they were not permitted. So it had to be done elsewhere. So later the meeting was moved to the Shöl Parkhang. The meeting representative were there and at Norbulinga, guards were posted and a Headquarters [Tib. bka' bkod khang] was also set up. Kundeling Kungö Dzasa was the head of the headquarters and Kungö Tarala and others were there. From the 1st to about the 7th, things went on, and meetings took place.

**Q:** How many meetings?

**A:** At Norbulinga, the meeting was for only one day. Then when it was moved, on the 4th or 5th there were meetings to which I was not a party. Only representative met there, not everyone.

**Q:** So of those who were at the meetings, are any still around here?

**A:** Yes, many. Well, I think so. However, today there are just a handful of old kudrak. Most have passed away. Your late grandfather was a representative. Then after some time the Women's Association demonstrated, saying the Chinese must leave. They went around the Barkor and at that time there was the Gorkha and Dekyilinga (Nepalese and India consulates). They went to these two places saying they have to serve as witnesses [Tib. bar dpang] that the Chinese have to leave Tibet, and that we the people have freedom. And then there was a lot of commotion.

**Q:** What happened with this Women's Association?

**A:** All the women had a meeting and then they demonstrated, but not with arms. They went to the Nepalese and Indian representatives saying that the Chinese have bullied us and that from this day on Tibet is an independent country so the Chinese must leave. This made matters of greater concern [than before], and the Chinese assembled many armed forces [Tib. drag dpung]

and so the Dalai Lama could not stay in such a situation. So it became a situation where the Dalai Lama had to be taken out [of Lhasa]. There was no choice since the army had surrounded us everywhere. Since the situation was like this, the Dalai Lama was brought out secretly with the Chinese not knowing. Thinking that he was still [in Norbulinga], on the morning of the 10th, around 2 a.m., the Chinese suppressed Norbulinga by force. At that time I was in Norbulinga.

**Q:** You were at Norbulinga when the first cannon was fired?

**A:** Yes. The the reason was that around Ramagang, about 2 in the morning, there were some shots. We don't know who fired them or what, since we were at Norbulinga. Then before dawn, the cannons were fired.

**Q:** When was it that the shots were fired?

**A:** It was that same morning around 2 a.m.

**Q:** Immediately after that the cannons were fired?

**A:** The cannons were fired around 4 or 5 a.m.. The first shell landed on the south gate, the Lhogo [of Norbulinga] and one lay official, I can't remember his name, was wounded, they say. There were about 6 or 7 shots fired at Norbulinga. Then we fired 1 or 2 howitzers from the Gusung Regiment or some other place. Then before dawn there was a break. Then right around dawn it started and then there were a tremendous number of shots fired right up to about 10 a.m. They were shooting, but they either didn't judge the distance well or whatever, because the shells burst about 3 stories high before touching the ground. So there were statements that the cannons were not that damaging. Then there was a break until around 11 a.m. or noon when the firing started again and continued until about 3 in the afternoon. Then there was no way of staying at Norbulinga. They were shooting like this [points finger].

**Q:** All over?

**A:** No, systematically, in lines. There was no place to escape.

**Q:** So at the time where were you?

**A:** We were running here and there. I was on the Norbulinga stage where there was a lot of water; how it got there I don't know. There was a lawn and while I was running, a shell landed on the ground, buried itself and then exploded. I was thrown past the door [pointing to his door about 25 feet away], I must have been scattered along with the earth.

**Q:** I see, you were flung?

**A:** Yes. The earth pressed against me or something, but I was not hit. Then I went into the office where our teacher and Bumtang were and I said we should not stay here. Then a shell landed on top of the house. When we were descending [the building] there was a small path. As soon as we got there, two shells landed and the house collapsed. We were pinned down. I thought that now we were going to get killed and die. But when the dust settled, it didn't feel that heavy, the beams had fallen over us [missed us]. I dusted myself and in front of me was Bumtang who I pushed. Nothing happened to him.

**Q:** So the whole house fell on you.

**A:** Tibetan houses are made from rafters and the middle must have snapped and fallen. So it was not able to press us very heavily. So we got out. As we left, our teacher and others were lined against a wall. so I said that we shouldn't stay here. At Norbulinga the trees were being hit and they would fall and injure people. So we were about 10 or so people pressed against a wall. At this time, the cannons were firing relentlessly and in my mind I thought that if a shell hit the wall which was very high it could collapse. So I said, "Oh, we shouldn't stay here. There is a door over there and it may be better to go there". Saying okay, we hardly had taken 10 or so steps when the wall was hit by 4 shells and collapsed. That's how it is when it is not one's time to die. Then we escaped to Jara, which was a village nearby. There were no shells firing there, but there was no limit to the number of guns shots. We did not see any soldiers until after dark. It was only the artillery units shelling all over. One should see soldiers fighting right? The cannons made it impossible to see. It's a pity [Tib. snying rje] that so many people died. We just could not match them. At the Jogpori [Tib. lcags po ri] hill, the artillery units shelled it heavily. They were cannons and guns firing.

**Q:** How long did the shelling and gunfire last?

**A:** All day on the 11th. Then when darkness approached, the [PLA] soldiers came. Those to be killed were killed and those to be arrested were arrested. People like us were arrested on the 12th and imprisoned.

**Q:** Where were you at the time?

**A:** We escaped to Jara [Tib. sb yar rag], right? All around it was surrounded by soldiers so there was no place to escape. We were arrested and taken down to Norbulinga where there were so many people. Then they put us in the Military Headquarters' prison. All the aristocrats were there. Also those who fought. So there were so many. At the Military Headquarter prison, it was mostly kudrak and the like. Taring, Tsarong, Bönshö and all the larger houses people were used to put imprison people who were arrested. The whole of Lhasa [answer not finished]

**Q:** So it was all over in one or two days.

**A:** Yes, the soldiers suppressed it in two-three days.

**Q:** So, from our side, [the army] like the Trapchi regiment, etc., were all there, right? There were fighting, right?

**A:** Yes, poor souls [Tib. snying rje], they were there. They fought a lot. On the 10th the whole day around the motor station [they fought]. We lost a lot of good soldiers.

**Q:** Which places did the fighting occur?

**A:** First there was fighting at the Jogpori Hill. There were 25 men [stationed there defending it]. The Chinese wiped them out completely. They all fought until the Chinese reached the house on the summit. They fought until they succumbed. However they were too many [PLA] with better arms so they could not manage. Likewise, on top of Bamari, the Trapchi Shengo fought and also some soldiers fought valiantly at the motor station and killed many Chinese. They did a lot, however, they were outnumbered and they all died. Likewise, also at the Potala Palace, on the night of the 12th they used cannons and Bren-guns from the nearby Chinese military camp and did not allow a soul to leave. They outnumbered us and were better armed, so we were killed and lost. So it was not that we did not fight. We fought with whatever we could, but the Chinese mainly used their big guns. Once those did their damage, the soldiers charged. Most of our people succumbed to the cannons.

**Q:** During this time did the people form a group. Did they have meetings to organize a fight?

**A:** Yes, the people rose up and they all got suppressed. There were no organizations, it was all voluntary [spontaneous]. Right after the calm after the 1959 uprising, when there were meetings, it was all women and just a few men. The men had all been arrested. The men all went to fight and many died and some were in prison. Everybody did what they could. It was a question of being outnumbering and [the enemy having] better arms. There was no formation of a group first and then fighting. For example, let's say here in this place in Dharamsala, if the Chinese fired cannons, all the men came out and fought, some of the women too. Those who did not die were put in prison. So it was not a case where we organized and fought and went down to Kangra and fought there. No, it was not like that at Lhasa. The whole country was suppressed. So the Chinese were ready from the beginning, and at all the various places there were a lot of Chinese military camps. So the Tibetans never thought about (planned) starting a war.

**Q:** The Chinese say that the night the Dalai Lama left they knew about it. From your personal experience at Lhasa, judging from their behavior, when do you think they knew about it?

**A:** Without any doubt, they only knew when Norbulinga was taken. To tell you the truth, if they knew that the Dalai Lama had left, then there were many military camps that he passed through and they would not have let him go. Who will let him go. For example, it is said that after the 1959 uprising there was a telegram from China. General Tan Guansan said that he has suppressed the rebellion. In reply to that Mao Zedong sent a telegram asking "Where is the Dalai Lama? If he went abroad then it is a loss." If it was true what the Chinese had said that they made the war after knowing the Dalai Lama left, then it is impossible for the Central government to say that, right?

**Q:** Is this mentioned in any documents?

**A:** They are not going to publish that, however, later General Tan Guansan was recalled and not left in Tibet. They say that was the reason why. That it was a mistake that the Dalai Lama was lost to the outside. So if it is true that they knew that the Dalai Lama had left, then the Central government [Ch. zhongyang] could not make such talk, right? So we can't prove this with documents, but what happened later was that Tan Guansan suppressed the rebellion and was triumphant. So he should have received a promotion. He was not someone who should have been recalled from his job. But he was recalled immediately and Zeng Yongya or Ren Rong or someone was sent as a replacement. So, internally they say that this was the real reason.

**Q:** So they must have gone to see if the Dalai Lama was there or not.

**A:** The Dalai Lama had written to Tan Guansan several times and he wrote to the Dalai Lama. So he assumed that he was there all along and fired the cannons. That's the reason Norbulinga was fired at first. If their intention was to safeguard the person of the Dalai Lama, then there was no need to fire first on Norbulinga. So later this was said in the Norbulinga. What happened was that among them [the PLA] there was Shölkang Jedrungla and their kind. He is related to you, right? They have said so. They were looking for all the bald headed ones that have been killed. So why were they looking for bald headed ones? Because they were looking for the Dalai Lama. Shölkang Kungö Jedrungla was at that time with the Chinese soldiers. He asked the monk official nicknamed Tsangmo Gyau [Lobsang Dorje], "Where is the Dalai Lama, where is he staying?" He replied, "The Dalai Lama has already left". Jedrungla exclaimed "What! When did he leave"?

**Q:** Who did he ask?

**A:** The monk official Tsangmo Gyau. The one who asked was Shölkang Jedrung Thubden Nyima.

**Q:** It is said that he came with the Chinese to Norbulinga, right?

**A:** Yes, he did. He went over to the Chinese very early on. Tsangmo Gyau, the monk official, was in Norbulinga. He was taken by them as an interpreter. Later he was imprisoned and we were together. So they asked him where was the Dalai Lama and when they heard that he had left they were shocked. The Chinese examined [the bodies] carefully--all the bald headed ones in Norbulinga. So it was great that the Dalai Lama went, otherwise it would have been very difficult. So like this if I have to tell you, there is so much. What I have said is known by all, so you don't require much detail here, right?

**Q:** Yes. In some Chinese books they say they knew that the Dalai Lama left that they allowed him to leave. They also say that there was an existing plan to take the Dalai Lama out. As you see it, in 1957 or 1958 was there talk that the Dalai Lama should not stay. Was the situation already grim in 1957-58.

**A:** Yes, the situation was bad in 1957-58. it was bad. I would not know if internally, if the Kashag told the Dalai Lama that it is a good time to leave, but usually that idea was not there. That's because the 1959 uprising rose suddenly. Until then, the Dalai

Lama tried all means to have good relations. That was what he usually advised--that we have to be friendly with the Chinese and that we have to bear the burden of any loss. So from looking at all that, there was no idea of leaving. However, when the situation is such that one has to leave, then one would need plans or whatever in order to leave. In 1956, the Dalai Lama came for pilgrimage to India and he said that he wanted to stay and the Chinese said that they will not begin democratic reforms which have been postponed for 6 years. Zhou Enlai guaranteed this and Nehru said it was a good idea to return. All this is clear in the Dalai Lama autobiography. So once the Dalai Lama was back, he didn't think that the Chinese would do something immediately like that. So it is not a case of being prepared to leave earlier. Neither was it a case where when the Dalai Lama was leaving, the Chinese knew about it and let him leave. We found the way and means to bring him out. So this was not on their minds. We can't say that the Chinese were not hoping that the Dalai Lama would come to them. They wrote and invited him and if they were able to get hold of him then they would have everything. If they could get him then they could take him down to Beijing. Even if they don't kill him, then they could do whatever they wanted with the Tibetan people. Like the Panchen Lama, they would say the Dalai Lama said this and that and so we will just become without any goals [Tib. dmigs med]. So we can't say that they did not try. However, the claim that they just let the Dalai Lama leave, is not possible.

**Q:** You just now used the word [Tib. dmigs med] . How should I understand it?

**A:** This means when one looks at a thing it is something that you see, right? Now it means something that is not there at all, and there is no goal at all.